# קורס פיתוח משחקי מחשב

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# המתגלגלת חלק ב

## Feedback Summary

Based on playtesting conducted using a demonstration level, the following feedback was gathered:

1. Fun and Engagement:
    • Players found the game engaging and enjoyable, with a good balance of exploration and combat.
    • However, some players noted that the difficulty was not as challenging as initially expected for a Souls-like game.

2. Mechanics Understanding:
    • Several players struggled to understand the counterattack mechanic and the sword-throwing ability.
    • These mechanics need better explanation or tutorial prompts to ensure players can fully utilize them.

3. Ultimate Skill Feedback:
    • Players appreciated the Ultimate Quick-Time Event (QTE) mechanic and found it visually satisfying.
    • However, many players waited too long to release the attack because they were unaware of the option to press the button again to trigger it sooner. This caused some frustration.

4. UI and Information:
    • Players expressed frustration at the lack of a detailed UI to view their current stats or equipped skills during gameplay.
    • They wanted to check stats and skill progress, especially for a game heavily focused on customization and growth.

5. Game Theme and Immersion:
    • Players noticed the lack of thematic consistency:
    • While the game is designed around an alchemist protagonist, the current textures feature a generic warrior instead of a thematic alchemist character.
    • The absence of alchemy-related items like potions, flasks, or themed enemies reduced immersion in the world.

6. Enemy Behavior:
    • While most enemies behaved as intended, players observed that one skeleton fell off a cliff during patrol, breaking immersion.

## Improvements Based on Feedback

• Difficulty Adjustment:
    • Increase enemy aggression and add more challenging patterns to skeletons and the planned archer/slime enemies.

• Tutorials and Prompts:

- Introduce brief, unobtrusive tutorial messages or hints for:
    - Counterattack mechanics.
    - Sword-throwing ability.
    - Add a tooltip or on-screen message explaining that the Ultimate attack can be manually triggered by pressing the button again.

- UI Enhancements:
    - Develop a simple UI that allows players to:
        - View their current stats (e.g., strength, agility).
        - Check equipped skills and skill cooldowns.

- Theme Implementation:
    - Replace the generic textures with alchemy-themed assets, such as:
    - A protagonist design that reflects an alchemist (e.g., a character with robes, potions, and tools).
    - Alchemy-related items (potions, flasks) integrated into the item system.
    - Enemies with thematic connections to the alchemist's world, like magical constructs or rogue experiments.

- Enemy Patrol Fix:
    - Refine NPC pathfinding to prevent enemies from falling off cliffs during patrols.

# השבועית חלק א

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## Blasphemous

**Numeric Attributes:**

The game offers unique types of items with numerical attributes. For example:

1)  <u>Mask of Humiliation (Optional Passive Item)</u>

   •   Numeric Attributes:

      o   Reduces damage dealt by 25%: A significant drawback for players relying on physical attacks.

      o   Increases Fervor points (Equivalent to "Mana") gained by 50%: Allows much more frequent use of magical abilities.

   •   Why were these numbers chosen?

      o   The 25%-50% ratio highlights the trade-off between sacrifice and reward. These numbers make the decision between aggressive play and magic-focused play more impactful.

   •   Effect on player choice:

      o   This mask appeals to players who favor magic, but the high cost prevents it from being an automatic choice.

   •   If the numbers were different:

      o   A smaller damage reduction (10%) would make it too popular, while a smaller Fervor boost (30%) would discourage players from using it.

2)  <u>Mea Culpa Sword (Upgradable Sword)</u>
   •   Numeric Attributes:

      o   Level 2 Upgrade: Base physical damage increases by 20% – a meaningful reward for progressing in the game.

      o   Level 4 Upgrade: Special attacks become faster, adding dynamism to combat.

   •   Why were these numbers chosen?

      o   These upgrades offer a noticeable, yet not overwhelming, improvement that creates a sense of progression without breaking the game balance.

   •   Effect on player choice:

      o   The upgrades for the sword are hidden in various areas throughout the game-map, requiring the player to be adventurous and explore.

   •   If the numbers were different:

      o   A 10% damage increase, for example, would make the upgrade feel less rewarding. On the contrary, 40% might make the player too powerful too early.

3) <u>Bile Flasks (Healing Items)</u>
- Numeric Attributes:
  - o Number of flasks: From 2 at the start of the game to a maximum of 9 – granting more survival chances in prolonged battles.
  - o Usage time: 2 seconds, leaving the player vulnerable mid-battle.
- Why were these numbers chosen?
  - o The limited number of flasks emphasizes the importance of exploration, while the usage time prevents easy and quick healing.

- Effect on player choice:
  - o Cautious players will seek out additional flasks, while others may rely more on agility and evasion during combat.

- If the numbers were different:
  - o Shorter usage time would reduce tension during boss fights, but it would also diminish the sense of accomplishment since battles might have been too easy.

**Item Placements:**

Fitting the Metroid-vania genre, the game has many uniquely placed items, such as:

1) <u>Tiento to your Thorned Hairs (Prayer – Equivalent to Spells)</u>

- Placement:
  - o Found in the Desecrated Cistern, a mid-game area with challenging enemies and environmental hazards.

- Developer Motive:
  - o The prayer grants temporary invincibility but doesn't restore health, encouraging strategic use during tough battles.
  - o Placing it in a mid-game area introduces it when players face increasing challenges, helping them adapt to the game's difficulty curve.

- Effect of Different Placement:
  - o Early placement might make the game feel easier, reducing tension in boss fights.
  - o Late placement would deny players an important tool during critical mid-game encounters.

2) <u>Blood Perpetuated in Sand (Relic – A unique exploration-enabling item)</u>
- Placement:
  - o Hidden in a platforming puzzle in the Graveyard of the Peaks (an area with lots of platforming), requiring a previously acquired item to access.

- Developer Motive:
  - o The relic allows traversal over blood platforms, discoverable only when equipping the item, unlocking new areas and secrets. Its placement ensures players must first explore and master earlier challenges.

o Encourages backtracking, a key aspect of the Metroidvania genre, and by doing so rewards exploration.

- Effect of Different Placement:
    o Placing it earlier might simplify exploration, reducing the sense of progression.
    o Placing it later might frustrate players who can't access optional areas and shortcuts when needed.

3) Tirso's Healing Herbs (Multiple Quest Items)
- Placement:
    o Scattered across early to mid-game areas like Albero (a hazardless city area) and the Brotherhood of the Silent Sorrow (an area with lots of enemies).

- Developer Motive:
    o The herbs are required to complete Tirso's questline, which grants additional health flasks. Their placement encourages players to revisit familiar areas while exploring new ones.
    o Placing them in diverse locations introduces a sense of discovery and ties exploration to meaningful rewards.

- Effect of Different Placement:
    o If the herbs were concentrated in one area, the quest would feel less like an adventure and more like a chore.
    o Placing them too late might deprive players of the flask upgrades when they need them most.

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# Behaviors:

The non-human characters follow specific behavioral rules rooted in the game's lore, mechanics, and thematic design. These rules shape their behavior and affect their complexity in several ways:

1) Actions Reflect Punishment and Penitence
- **Behavior:**
  Non-human entities, such as bosses and enemies, are manifestations of sins, curses, or divine punishment. Their actions are often exaggerated, relentless, and symbolic of their humane burden.
- **Impact on Complexity:**
  This thematic rule gives each character distinct motivations and attack patterns that resonate with their possible backstory. For example, an enemy might attack erratically to reflect the desperation of their former selves, adding emotional depth to their behavior.

2) React to Player Proximity and Actions
- **Behavior:**
  Enemies often respond dynamically to player actions, such as closing distance for melee attacks or retreating to use ranged abilities. Some adapt their behavior mid-battle (e.g., bosses adding phases or attacks as their health decreases).
- **Impact on Complexity:**
  This creates a sense of challenge and unpredictability from the player's PoV. Each encounter feels dynamic, requiring the player to read and react to enemy patterns, which adds to their perceived intelligence and realism.

3) Environmental Integration
- **Behavior:**
  All non-human characters appear visually tied to their environment, such as stone guardians of a keep or lowly creatures exploring dark sewers. (e.g., archers positioned on high ledges or enemies using traps).
- **Impact on Complexity:**
  Their behavior reflects an intimate connection to their surroundings, making them feel like natural extensions of the world. This elevates their role beyond simple obstacles, as their presence enhances the environment's hostility and story.

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## Economy:

Since the game is a single-player experience, it does not contain a trade-system within it.

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## Information:

The player's awareness of the game system is intentionally balanced between revealed and hidden elements. This design, combined with its 2D platformer structure, significantly impacts the player's experience.

1)  What's Revealed to the Player?

·   **Health, Fervor, and Resources:**
The player's health bar, Fervor meter, and collectible items, e.g. Tears of Atonement (currency) and Bile Flasks (healing potions), are always visible, ensuring the player can monitor their survival and ability to act in combat.

·   **Attack Patterns and Abilities:**
The effects of weapons, prayers, and relics are explained in tooltips, making their functions clear. Basic mechanics, such as parrying and dodging, are introduced at the start of the game.

·   **Map Progression:**
The game map "fills" in as the player explores, revealing previously visited areas and specific points of interest like shrines and shortcuts.

2)  What's Hidden from the Player

·   **Lore and Backstory:**
The story is cryptic, and much of the lore is literally hidden in item descriptions, dialogue, or environmental storytelling. Players must actively piece together the narrative and the state of the game's world.

·   **Enemy Patterns and Boss Phases:**
Enemies and bosses often introduce new attacks or behaviors with no previous warnings, requiring trial-and-error to master encounters.

·   **Secrets and Upgrades:**
Many areas, items, and shortcuts are hidden behind environmental puzzles or require specific items to access.

3)  How Does the Player Discover New Information?

· **Exploration:**
Players uncover new areas, items, and shortcuts by revisiting places with newly acquired abilities (e.g., relics for platforming or traversal).

· **Trial and Error:**
Combat relies on learning from failure. Only after repeated attempts will the player fully learn the enemies' attack patterns.

· **Observation and Interaction:**
Players gain lore and quest details by speaking to NPCs, examining items, or noticing environmental clues.

4) <u>How the 2D Platformer Structure Contributes</u>

· **Clarity in Exploration:**
The 2D perspective simplifies navigation and makes hidden paths feel like deliberate rewards for exploration. The layered levels create a sense of verticality despite the 2D constraint, enhancing the player's curiosity.

· **Tactile Combat:**
The confined space of a 2D platformer amplifies the intensity of combat encounters, forcing players to adapt quickly to enemy patterns.

· **Intimate World-Building:**
The limited field of view in a 2D environment encourages players to focus on details in the foreground and background, making the world feel dense and immersive.

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# Control:

The player possesses various types of control over the game world:

1) <u>Types of Control Over the World</u>

· **Direct Control:** Players control The Penitent One's movement, attacks, and interactions in real-time. This creates an immersive experience where every action feels impactful, especially during combat and exploration.

· **Indirect Control:** Players influence the world through progression, such as uncovering relics or completing quests. These choices shape how the player navigates the world and adds strategic depth to exploration.
The balance between direct and indirect control gives players both immediate engagement and long-term influence over the game world.

2) <u>Real-Time vs. Alternating Control</u>

· **Real-Time Control:** The game primarily operates in real-time, requiring quick decisions and reactions in combat and platforming. This keeps the gameplay fast-paced and intense, with immediate consequences for the player's actions.

· **Alternating Control:** Moments of strategic decision-making, such as upgrading abilities or selecting path-enabling relics, allow players to pause and reflect. These breaks add depth and let players shape their approach to future challenges without interrupting the flow of the game.
The mix of real-time action and alternating strategic moments creates a dynamic, challenging experience that balances intensity with thoughtful planning.

# Dynamic Phenomena:

1)  <u>Dynamic Phenomena Discovered by Players:</u>

The following are intended dynamics discovered by players and discussed over online:
· Air Impulse Mechanic:
    o By holding down and striking an object or enemy mid-air, players achieve a small upward boost, known as an "air impulse."
    o When equipped with the "Big Toe Made of Limestone" passive item, this ability can be extended, allowing up to four consecutive boosts before landing. This created a unique mechanic for navigating vertical spaces while keeping the player airborne. ([blasphemous.fandom.com](blasphemous.fandom.com))
· Ladder Jump:
    o Players have discovered that jumping off ladders can be performed more smoothly by pressing the jump button while holding the ladder.
    o This allows for quicker and more fluid transitions from climbing to jumping, especially useful in more challenging platforming sections. ([blasphemous.fandom.com](blasphemous.fandom.com))

2)  <u>Unintended "Dynamic Bugs":</u>

· Invincibility After Animation:
    o Some players have reported a bug where after a certain animation, such as finishing a special move or attack, the character briefly becomes invincible.
    o This can allow players to bypass otherwise dangerous attacks from enemies, creating an unintended advantage during combat. ([steamcommunity.com](steamcommunity.com))
· Hitbox Issues During Dash:
    o There are reports of instances where, during a dash attack, the player's hitbox may not register as expected, either missing enemies or triggering unintended damage.
    o This bug alters the game's combat dynamics by affecting the precision of attacks, leading to unpredictable combat encounters. ([reddit.com](reddit.com))

# Game Community:

The community, while not as large as those of more mainstream game titles, has cultivated a dedicated and engaged following. For example, on Steam - The game has seen a peak of 3,247 concurrent players (as of writing this).
Social and Cultural Phenomena:

· **Cultural Exploration:** Players have delved into the game's rich cultural tapestry, discussing its deep connections to Spanish religious history and traditions. For instance, one player described *Blasphemous* as "a full-fledged ethnographic slice of the era, a kind of cultural encyclopedia," highlighting the game's portrayal of the period. ([steamcommunity.com](steamcommunity.com))

- **Anthropological Discussions:** The game has sparked anthropological analyses, examining its narrative and design. One study noted that the game "offers a story of transformation and empathy which ties it in deeply with Spanish history and the new potentials in storytelling." ([playthepast.org](playthepast.org))

- **Overall Community Engagement:** The community actively engages in discussions about the game's themes, mechanics, and cultural references. Players share insights, fan art, and analyses, fostering a vibrant and interactive environment. ([reddit.com](reddit.com))

These phenomena are the source of the community's deep appreciation for the game's cultural depth.

# השבועית חלק ב

## Changing and Testing Dynamic Elements of Catan

### Option A: Changing Numerical Features

Change Made: Increased or decreased the costs of buildings, roads, and settlements.

Simulation and Results:
• Gameplay Impact:
• Higher Costs:
    • Made the game longer and more difficult, as players struggled to gather resources for expensive buildings.
    • Reduced player engagement because progress felt slow and unbalanced for those unlucky with resource rolls.
• Lower Costs:
    • Made the game feel too fast-paced and boring, as players quickly completed objectives without needing much strategy.
• Player Feedback:
    • Players felt the original costs were better, as they balanced strategy and resource management.
    • Changes to costs disrupted the pacing and flow of the game.

### Option B: Adding an Economy

Change Made: Introduced auctions for special development cards, with specific cards visible and priced differently (e.g., knights, road-building, monopoly).

Simulation and Results:
• Gameplay Impact:
    • Players could see and purchase specific development cards rather than drawing randomly. For example, knights cost fewer resources, while monopoly and road-building cards were more expensive.
    • This led to imbalanced gameplay, as one player monopolized critical resource cards early and gained a massive advantage.
    • The lack of surprise diminished the tension and fun, as everyone knew exactly what cards were available and how they might be used.
• Balancing Issues:
    • It was difficult to set fair prices for different cards. Cheaper cards led to overuse, while expensive cards were ignored.
• Player Feedback:
    • Most players disliked the change, citing a loss of surprise and strategic tension.
    • One player noted that the economy felt "broken" as the auctions allowed certain players to dominate unfairly.

### Option C: Changing Information Structure

Change Made: Randomized resource cells on the field by swapping their positions every round.

Simulation and Results:
• Gameplay Impact:

• Each round, the locations of resource tiles changed, and players had to adapt to new resource yields.
• This removed the long-term strategy of placing settlements near valuable resources, as the board layout was constantly shifting.
• Players found it nearly impossible to plan ahead, leading to frustration and reliance on luck.
• Swapping the tiles every round was time-consuming and disrupted the flow of the game, making it feel tedious and less engaging.
• Player Feedback:
    • Most players found this change frustrating and said it ruined the strategic essence of the game.
    • Many noted that the constant swapping made gameplay feel more like a chore than a fun, dynamic experience.
    • Some felt it might work in a simpler, luck-based game but not in a strategy-heavy game like Settlers of Catan.

## Option D: Changing Control

Change Made: Replace direct settlement placement with indirect control through a bidding system.

How It Works:
    • Players no longer place settlements directly on the board. Instead, each round, players bid resources to "claim" random placements for their settlements.
    • The board has pre-determined, unoccupied settlement locations. Bidding determines which player gets to place a settlement there.

Simulation and Results:
• Gameplay Impact:
    • Indirect control made placement less strategic and more resource-driven.
    • Players with more resources had a significant advantage, as they could outbid others repeatedly.
    • Lower-resource players became frustrated, as they couldn't place settlements where they wanted.
• Player Feedback:
    • Players found the bidding mechanic interesting but felt it didn't fit with Catan's emphasis on strategic planning.
    • The game felt less immersive and more chaotic.